(c) whether Government propose to purchase sugar by inviting tenders for imported sugar from private parties and also consult State Governments producing enough sugar before making further direct imports; and

(d) whether Government are favouring/proposing to freez licensing for new units for some time instead of delicensing as reportedly stated by the Prime Minister recently in Karnataka; if so, the details thereof ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF FOOD (SHRI KALP NATH RAI) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) A quantity of about 9.77 lakh tonnes of sugar has been imported recently for meeting the requirements of the Public Distribution System. Of this, a quantity of 1 lakh tonne was allocated for distribution during the 1993-94 season leaving a balance of 8.77 lakh tonnes, for utilisation during the 1994-95 season.

(c) There is no such proposal at present to purchase imported sugar from the private importers.

(d) The licensing policy, including the option of delicensing, is presently under the consideration of Government.

Plan for Farmers for Free Movement of their Products

1534. SHRI RAM JETHMALANI : Will the Minister of FOOD be pleased to state whether Government have any plans to enable the farmers free movement of their products including the right to export and compete in the international market ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF FOOD (SHRI KALP NATH RAI):

The Government has already decided to treat the entire country as a single Food Zone for the movement of foodgrains after ensuring that it does not have any adverse effects. All the States/Union Territories except Andhra Pradesh, Jammu & Kashmir, West Bengal and Tamil Nadu have implemented the above policy. These States are also being pursuaded to consider the matter and remove the movement restrictions on foodgrains. Under Export/Import Policy, the farmers are also eligible to export foodgrains and food products alongwith others subject to fulfilment of general conditions applicable to all exporters in this regard. However, it is the Policy of the Government to all the export of items of mass consumption in such a manner that it does not compromise our Food Security System.

Permissioin to Release More Foodgrains

1535. SHRI SUSHILKUMAR SAMBAJIRAO SHINDE : Will the Minister of FOOD be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that the Food Corporation of India has sought permission to release more foodgrains at lower prices and export at lower than economic cost to tide over the mounting stocks resulting from high procurement and low sales through public distribution system ;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) what decision Government propose to take in this matter ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF FOOD (SHRI KALP NATH RAI) :

(a) to (c) The Government have authorised the Food Corporation of India (FCI) to sell 50 Lakh Metric Tonnes of wheat upto December, 1997 and 15 Lakh Metric Tonnes of rice from the Central Pool upto September, 1995 in the open market, the Food Corporation of India is continuing the open sale operation at the prices fixed from time to time which are normally below the economic cost. From October, 1993 to November, 1994 about 45.39 Lakh Metric Tonnes of wheat has been sold in the open market. From January to November, 1994 about 2.04 Lakh Metric Tonnes of rice has been sold in open market.

The Government has allowed the export of 5 Lakh Metric Tonnes of non-durum wheat without Minimum Export Price from the open market during the 1994-95 and Food Corporation of India is also eligible to export wheat within the said ceiling subject to certain conditions. The Food Corporation of India has not exported any quantity so far. Recently Food Corporation of India has also been authorised to sell initially 50,000 Metric Tonnes of wheat from the Central Pool to the State Trading Corporation at prevailing open sale prices for the purpose of export. No decision has been taken to export rice from he Central Pool.